

Gazelle and the excellent Stark carried the party on exploring expeditions all over the countryside. In one delicious village they wandered, after lunch at the inn, into the little church which stood embowered among blossoming trees. The old vicar left his garden and offered to show them its beauties, and Jean fell in love with the simplicity and the feeling of homeliness that was about it.

"Biddy," she whispered, "what a delicious church to be married in. You could hardly help being happy ever after if you were married here."

Later in the day, when they were alone, he reminded her of her words.

"Why shouldn't we, Penny-plain? Why shouldn't we? I know you hate a fussy marriage and dread all the letters and presents and meeting crowds of people who are strangers to you. Of course, it's frightfully good of Mrs. Hope to offer to have it at Hopetoun, but that means waiting, and this is the spring-time, the real 'pretty ring-time.' I would rush up to London and get a special licence. I don't know how in the world it's done, but I can find out, and Pam would come, and David, and we'd be married in the little church among the blossoms. Let's say the thirtieth. That gives us four days to arrange things. . . ."

"Four days," said Jean, "to prepare for one's wedding!"

"But you don't need to prepare. You've got lovely clothes, and we'll go straight to Mintern Abbas, where it doesn't matter what we wear. I tell you what, we'll go to London to-morrow and see lawyers and things—do you realise you haven't even got an engagement ring, you neglected child? And tell Pam—— Mad? Of course, it's mad. It's the way they did in the Golden World. It's Rosalind and Orlando. Be persuaded, Penny-plain."

"Priorsford will be horrified," said Jean. "They aren't